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Nodwick

by Aaron Williams





SOMEONE MENTION ME?



HELLO MORTALS,
AND ALL THAT JAZZ,
PREPARE TO MEET ONE OF
THE MOVERS AND SHAKERS
OF THE METAPHYSICAL
MULTIVERSE, THE ONE,
THE ONLY.

WELCOME



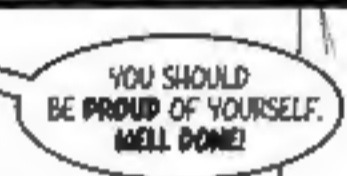
WELCOME RANDO



DID YOU DO THAT
ALL BY YOURSELF, PIFFIN?
THAT'S VERY GOOD!



OH, IT WAS
NOTHING. I JUST USED A
"CREATE SACKCLOTH" BLESSING
AND GATHERED SOME BERRIES
TO MAKE PAINT.



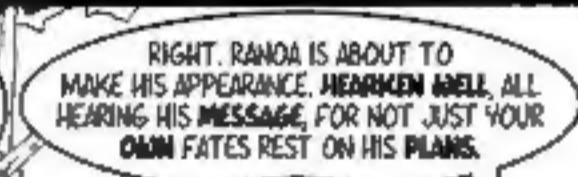
YOU SHOULD
BE PROUD OF YOURSELF.
WELL DONE!



WELCOME



THE BANNER
HAS BEEN DULY
APPRECIATED.
NOW WHAT?



RIGHT. RANDO IS ABOUT TO
MAKE HIS APPEARANCE. HEARDEN WELL, ALL
HEARING HIS MESSAGE, FOR NOT JUST YOUR
OWN FATES REST ON HIS PLANS.



YEAH, YEAH,
LISTENING. GOT IT. LET'S
MOVE THIS SHOW
ALONG.



BEHOLD,
THE MANIFESTATION
OF RANDO!

GREETINGS,
MORTALS. BEHOLD
THE SIGIL OF RANDO,
WHICH BESPEAKS MY
PRESENCE!



I HAVE COME TO--



DID YOU MAKE THAT BANNER YOURSELF, YOUNG LADY? IT'S VERY NICE.

WHAT IS IT WITH HIGHER BEINGS AND BANNERS?

OH, THANK YOU, I--

DUNNO, BUT AT LEAST I KNOW WHAT TO GET MY LOCAL PRIEST NEXT YULETIDE.



SO, YOU AREN'T A WELL-A PHYSICAL BEING? YOU KIND OF LOOK ABSTRACT.

INDEED, MY SYMBOL IS A REPRESENTATION OF MY MIGHTY METAPHORICAL HAND GRASPING THE METAPHORICAL WRITING STYLUS WITH WHICH I WROTE THE UNIVERSE INTO BEING.

OOOH, THAT'S VERY POETIC.

NO DISRESPECT, BUT DON'T A BUNCH OF OTHER GODS CLAIM TO HAVE CREATED THE UNIVERSE?


OH, YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE CHUTZPAH OF THOSE PEOPLE. SURE, THEY MAY HAVE CREATED COCONUTS, A FEW DIMPLES IN THE MOON, OR A LEY LINE OR TWO. BUT DOES THE GUY WHO DID THE ACTUAL PAPERWORK GET ANY RECOGNITION? NOOOOOOO.



WE WERE TOLD THERE WAS GOING TO BE A PLAN SOMEWHERE IN ALL THIS.



YES, OF COURSE. HEED MY WORDS, LET ALL WHO HAVE EARS, LET THEM HEAR, FOR THIS IS MIGHTY RANO'S PLAN FOR BREACHING THE DEFENSES OF THE DREAD GOD BAPHUMA'AL. MAY HE ROT IN DARKNESS. BEHOLD!



WE WILL BE
RUNNING A SPECIAL
TYPE OF INFORMATION
OFFENSE.

THE GOAL
HERE IS TO
MOVE YOUR
WEAPON-BEARER
INTO POSITION SO
THAT HE OR SHE
CAN PENETRATE THE
CITY'S DEFENSES
AND TAKE THE
FIGHT TO THE
ENEMY
CAPTAIN.

INFORMATION?

YES, AS IN "I BETTER
LISTEN UP IF I DON'T WANT TO
DIE." GOT IT?

YES, COACH.

GOOD. SO
APPROACHETH THEE
THE CITY AS THE SUN
WOULD GREET IT. THEN GET
THEE HENCE TO THE DEFENSIVE
LINE WITH A FEINT. KNOW MY
FORCES SHALL BE WITH YOU IN
THIS ENDEAVOR. BUT ONCE YOU
ARE IN THE CITY, YOU WILL BE
BEYOND MY POWER. WHEN THE
SIGNS APPEAR, YOU SHALL KNOW
IT IS YOUR TIME TO ENTER. NOW
THAT ALL HAVE HEARD THIS PLAN,
GO FORTH AND EXECUTE IT
BEFORE TWO TURNS OF THE
CLOCK. AND LET'S SEE
SOME HUSTLE.

DID ANYBODY
GET THAT? IT
SOUNDED LIKE WE'RE
SUPPOSED TO ATTACK
FROM THE EAST.

I GOT
THAT, TOO. HE
WAS AWFULLY
VAGUE ABOUT
IT.

GODS ARE
PRETTY FLOWERY
AND OBSCURE LIKE
THAT. IT'S A HOBBY,
I GUESS.

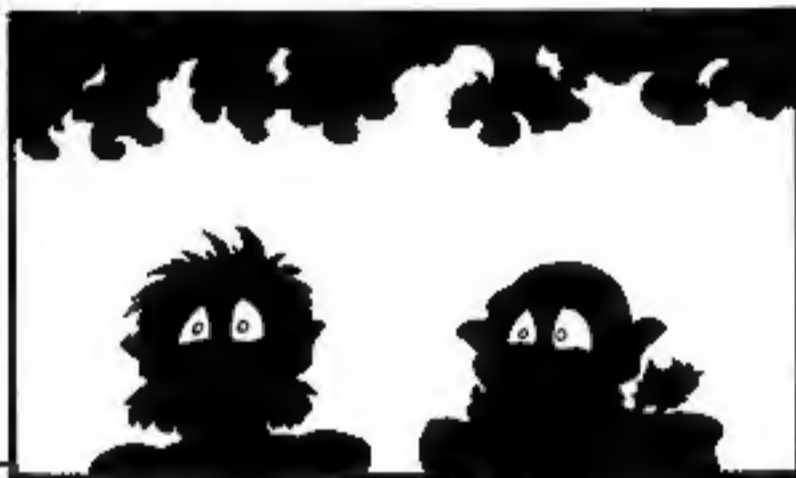
OKAY,
LET'S GET THIS
SHOW ON THE
ROAD.

THEY SEAL
THEIR DOOM. THEY WILL
ATTACK FROM THE EAST. HAVE OUR
FORCES GATHER TO GREET THEM.
CONCEAL OUR NUMBERS, HOWEVER,
IN CASE THE INTRUDERS LACK FAITH
IN THEIR PATRON'S
POWERS.

IT SHALL BE
DONE, MY...

OUR NEAREST
SOLDIERS HAVE ARISEN. THE
FIRST OF THE MASQUES
ARE READY!







THIS IS...
UNEXPECTED.

FEEL MY
RIGHTEOUS
WRATH AND GET
THEE HENCE
WITH MUCH
ZAPPING AND
SMITING!

GO ON, GET
HENCE!

WHERE ARE THE
INVADERS? THE ONES
CARRYING THE PART OF
OUR LORD?

IN ALL
THIS CHAOS, THEY
COULD BE ANYWHERE!
THEY—WAIT...

ONE OF MY
MINIONS... SEES...

SLOW AND
STUPID. WHAT MORE
COULD A GIRL
ASK FOR?

YOU ARE
TALKING ABOUT
THE ZOMBIES,
RIGHT?

I THINK I
PREFERRED THE ORCS. AT
LEAST THEY COULD BE
SCARED OFF.

AND THE
LEFTOVERS DIDN'T
KEEP TWITCHING
SO MUCH.

ICKY-
SMELL-HEAD
ZOMBIES! TAKE
THAT!





WE ARE
DECEIVED! THEY'RE
INFILTRATING THE CITY
ELSEWHERE!

WHERE?! IF
YOU KNOW, I CAN
TELEPORT US!



NO NEED.
THE GAUNTLET
WAS MADE FOR WAR,
AND IT LETS ME
CHANGE PLACES
WITH ANY OF MY
MINIONS.

I'LL BRING
ELONAN THE INTRUDERS'
CORPSES FOR
REANIMATION.



FIFTY-
ONE! HOW'RE YOU
DOING?

SIXTY!
YOU MUST BE
SLOWING DOWN
IN YOUR OLD
AGE.



ONE LEFT.
LADIES FIRST.

AN, AGE
BEFORE
BEAUTY.

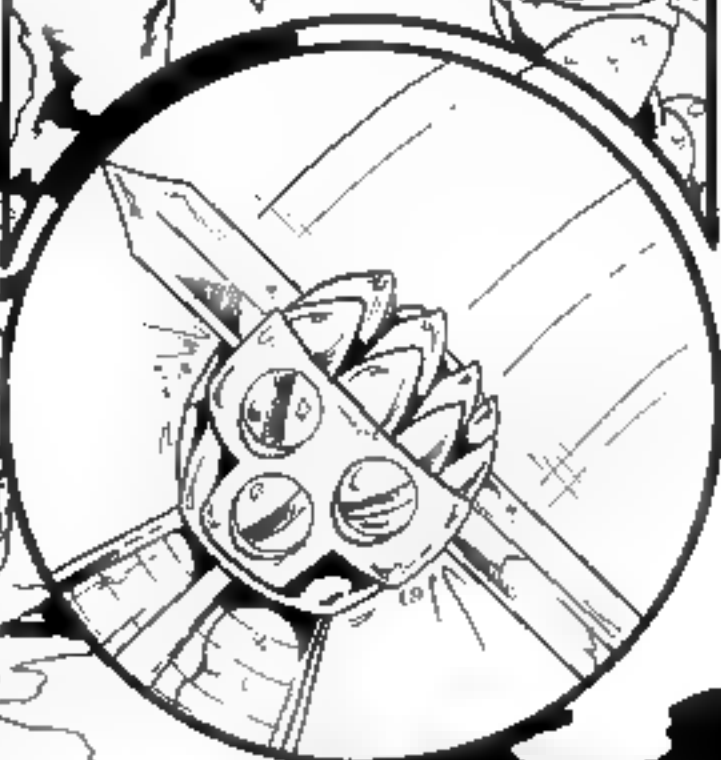
YOUTH BEFORE
EXPERIENCE.

PEARLS
BEFORE SWINE.

WILL
SOMEBODY TAKE
THAT THING
OUT?



OH, ALL RIGHT.
ONE HEAD-CLEAVING
COMING UP!





HELLO, INSECT.

OH,
POOP-ON-A-
STICK



YOU WERE
NOT WORTHY TO
WEAR THE GAUNTLET. IT
WAS RIGHT THAT YOU
WERE SEPARATED FROM
ITS POWER.



NOW, THE
LITTLE CLERIC IS
NEXT, I--

NO! I GET
TO DO THE NEXT
ONE!



RETURN
TO YOUR PRISON,
REPUGNANT! THIS SHELL
IS MINE NOW!

NOT UNTIL
I GET TO TAKE
OUT AT LEAST ONE OF
THEM! AND NOT THE
HENCHMAN! THAT'S
NOT SATISFYING
AT ALL.



BUT I'M NOT
KILLING THEM YET!
THE ONE IS JUST STUNNED!
I WANT TO TORTURE
THEM SLOWLY AND MAKE
THEM INTO MY UNDEAD
MINIONS!

BUT YOU
HAVE NO IDEA HOW
LONG I'VE WAITED FOR
THIS! THEY'VE FOILED MY
PLANS OVER AND OVER!
DID I MENTION I ALMOST
TOOK OVER THE WORLD,
RECENTLY?



I KNOW! I READ
YOUR MEMORIES! YOU'VE
BEEN AT FAULT FOR YOUR OWN FAILURES
AS MUCH AS THEY WERE, AND YOU'RE
SCREWING EVERYTHING UP
AGAIN! IDIOT!

YOU TAKE
THAT BACK!



AND IF I
DON'T?

THEN YOU
GET THIS!



BIFF!



YOU PUNCHED
YOURSELF, TOO, YOU
KNOW.

I THOUGHT
YOU SAID THIS
WASN'T MY BODY
ANYMORE. HAVE
AT YOU!



BLOWNT!





WHY AREN'T THEY TURNING THE SPELLS OFF AND LETTING US IN?

IT'S DARK, THEY'RE SURROUNDED BY A HOSTILE FORCE, AND THEY CAN'T SEE FOR SQUAT. THEY PROBABLY CAN'T TELL WHO WE ARE!

AND I THINK BAPHUMAL HAS SOMETHING CUTTING OFF MY CONTACT WITH THE WIZARDING GUILD.



WHY NOT FLY OVER THEM WITH ORVILLE?

SO THAT'S A "NO," THEN?

AND GIVE BOTH THE BAD GUYS AND THE GOOD GUYS REASON TO SHOOT US DOWN? HALF OF THE ARCHERS AROUND HERE HAVE DARKVISION, AND THERE'S AT LEAST TWO MOUNTED DRAGON WARRIORS IN THE AREA.

ANY IDEAS?

MAYBE. HOW QUICKLY CAN YOU RIG UP ONE OF THOSE BANNERS, PIFFANY?

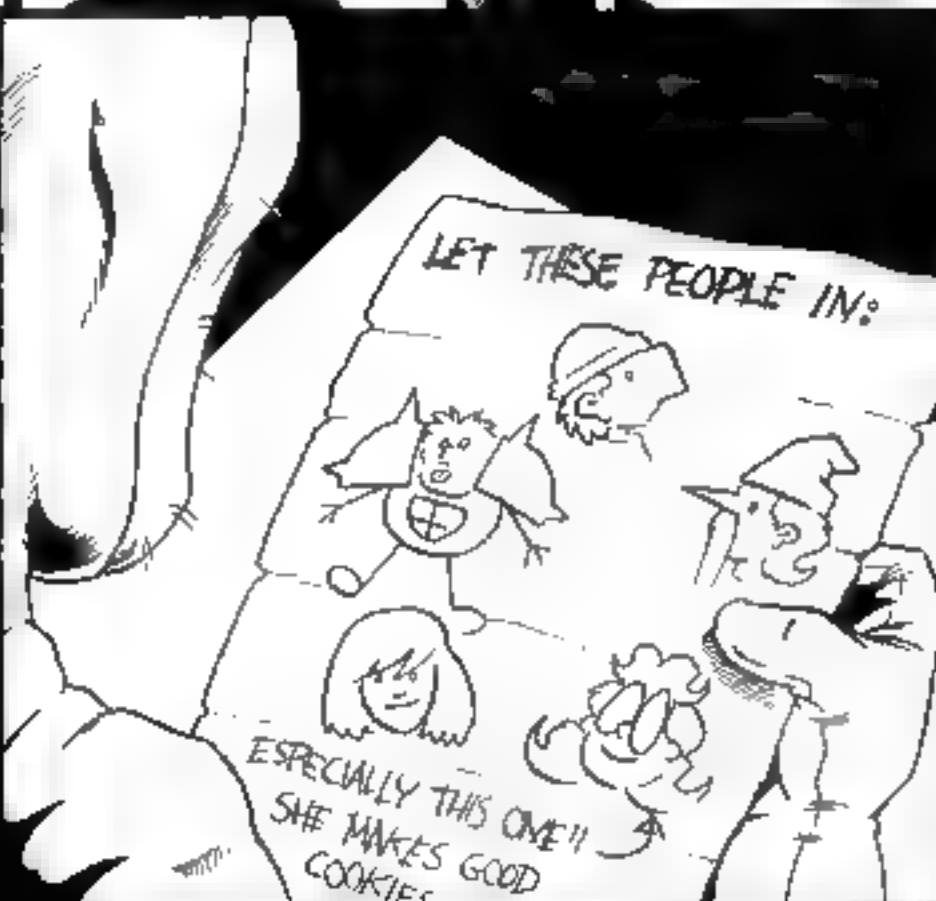
MOMENTS LATER, ON THE CITY WALLS.



WELL, SERGEANT, WHAT DO YOU MAKE OF THEM?

NOT SURE, SIR. IT LOOKS LIKE ONE WOMAN, A SCARECROW, AN OAF, AND TWO GNOMES. ONE CUTE AND ONE NOT. AND... THEY'VE BEEN JOINED BY A SMALL DRAGON THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE INTERESTED IN EATING THEM.

WAIT, THAT SOUNDS LIKE...



LET THESE PEOPLE IN:

ESPECIALLY THIS ONE!! SHE MAKES GOOD COOKIES



HMM... IT SEEMS LIKE THEM, BUT HOW CAN WE BE SURE?



PIFFANY? WE CAN
BARELY STAND UP TO REPUGNANT
WHEN HE'S JUST AS SAME AS A SOUP
SANDWICH. NOW HE'S GOT THE
GAUNTLET, TOO!

WHICH IS WHY I
NEED YOU TO STALL HIM FOR
A FEW SECONDS.

LEFT LEG!
LEFT LEG!

LOOK, I THINK
I'M BEING VERY REASONABLE
FOR HAVING MY BODY
HACKED, SO...

HEM...
UH, HEY, THERE...
COUNT?

OH, UH, HOW?

THINK
OF SOMETHING!
HURRY!

THE HENCHMAN
YOU'VE GIVEN ME MORE THAN
ENOUGH CAUSE TO SHATTER
YOUR SOUL!

YOU, TOO?
OH, YES, REALLY? SMALL
WORLD.

ANYWAY,
I'VE BEEN SENT TO,
UH, NEGOTIATE
WITH YOU.

NEGOTIATE
WITH US?

WELL,
YEAH, MY EMPLOYERS
SENT ME—

WAIT, "US?"

YOU FACE
UTIMARR VERHGO,
GREATEST WARRIOR
OF—

COUNT
REPUGNANT, ANTI-
PALADIN AND
TERROR

I'M IN CHARGE! NO, I AM!
DON'T MAKE ME SMACK YOU AGAIN! YOU AND
WHAT ARMY? MY UNDEAD ARMY WHO LIKES
ME BEST, BY THE WAY.

OH, I WAS
ONLY AUTHORIZED
TO SURRENDER TO ONE
PERSON. YOU'LL HAVE
TO FIGURE OUT WHO'S
RUNNING THE SHOW
BEFORE WE CAN
PROCEED.

PROCEED?
I'M GOING TO
DESTROY YOU ALL
ANYWAY!

NO, I—

SHUT UP! SO
WHY DO YOU INSIST
ON WASTING MY
TIME?

IT'S FOR THE
EPIC BALLAD?

THE WHAT?

YOU AND YOUR
BOSS ARE DOING EPIC STUFF
HERE. THERE'S BOUND TO BE SONGS
WRITTEN ABOUT IT, AND WE JUST WANTED
TO MAKE SURE IT ALL WENT INTO
HISTORY ACCURATELY.

HMM. HE HAS A
POINT THERE.

WHY? AFTER WE
TURN HIM AND HIS FRIENDS
INTO ZOMBIES, WHO ARE THEY GOING
TO TELL? THIS IS NOTHING BUT
A RUSE!

HEY, WHAT
DID YOU JUST
DO?

SKIT ON!
SKIT ON!



THEY'RE
GETTING AWAY
AGAIN!

WE'LL HAVE
TO STOP SCRATCHING AND
WORK TOGETHER!

ON THREE,
ONE, TWO...

THREE!

HA-DOOOOOOON!



ARE ALL
WELL, SIRS? ER,
AND LADIES?

HARROWING
ESCAPES. ALL IN A
DAY'S WORK.

WE'RE FINE.
LET'S GO TRACK DOWN
THIS BAPHUMNAL CHARACTER
BEFORE BIG, METALLIC AND
UGLY BRINGS BACK SOME
FRIENDS.

I FOUND
YOU A BOW, ARTAX HAS THE
ARROW, SO...



UHL.



WHAT'S
GOING ON OVER
THERE?

PIFFANY'S NEVER
IN THAT MUCH OF A
HURRY, UNLESS...



ONE SIDE!
COMIN THROUGH! WHAT'S
ALL THE--?

IS
HE STILL
ALIVE?

ALL IS
OCCLUDED. I
CANNOT FORESEE
HIS FATE.

WE'LL NOT
BE LONG IN
LINGERING. I'D
WAGER.

WHERE ARE
THE CLERICS? I GET
THEM HERE EVEN IF
THEY HAVE TO BE
DRAGGED!

WE'D BEST
GET EVERYONE
BEHIND THE
WALLS!





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